

Jane Henney, M.D., Commissioner
U.S. Food and Drug Administration
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

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Dear Dr. Henney:

As a health professional concerned about the public's health, I urge you to study and approve a petition concerning sugar labeling that was submitted to the FDA in August. That petition calls on the FDA to establish a "Daily Value" for refined/added sugars. The petition then asks that the FDA require the amount (in grams) of added sugars be declared on food labels and also expressed as a percentage of the Daily Value.

I am deeply concerned about the impact of diets high in refined sugars on health. While most past attention has focused on tooth decay, a much more important consideration is that sugary foods are likely to squeeze more nutritious foods out of the diet and reduce the overall nutrient density of the diet. Most obviously, soft drinks may replace milk, which is far more nutritious and important for prevention of osteoporosis. Indeed, 20 years ago, teenagers were consuming almost twice as much milk as soft drinks, but now they are consuming twice as much soft drinks as milk. Heavy consumption of soft drinks also may well contribute to obesity, the incidence of which has soared in the past two decades. Weight-loss counselors routinely advise overweight clients to reduce consumption of soft drinks and other empty-calorie foods.

Better labeling would help consumers recognize just how much added sugars are in processed foods. Currently, it is impossible to determine the added-sugars content in foods such as flavored yogurt and ice cream, which contain both natural and added sugars. (I am not concerned about consumption of natural sugars, in dairy products, fruit, and vegetables, because those sugars are usually accompanied by a variety of nutrients. Indeed, we should be consuming *more* of those foods.)

Quick approval of the sugars-labeling petition would make it easier for me and other health professionals to help consumers who are trying to consume a healthier diet.

Sincerely,

Shakuntala Chaube

10/14/99



Dr. Shakuntala Chaube
Apt 1605
11801 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852

99P-2630

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Nutrition Action Alert

October, 1999

Dear Doctor:

We would like your support and help on an important nutrition issue. CSPI, together with several dozen health organizations and scientists, recently petitioned the Food and Drug Administration to require better labeling of added sugars in foods. We asked the FDA to (a) set a "Daily Value" for refined sugars and (b) to require food labels to list the amount of refined sugars that a serving of food contains and the percentage of the Daily Value that that amount represents. (The petition and other information about added sugars is available on CSPI's web site at www.cspinet.org/new/sugar/html.)

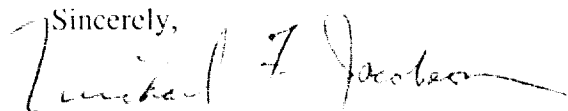
Better labeling of sugars is important if Americans are to appreciate just how much refined sugars they are consuming. Since 1983, consumption of refined sugars increased by 28 percent. The average person now obtains about 16 percent of his or her calories from those sugars, with many people consuming far more. While the U.S. Department of Agriculture recommends that someone consuming 2,000 calories per day consume no more than 10 teaspoons of sugar, the average American consumes twice that amount. The average teenage boy consumes a whopping 34 teaspoons.

When you look at the soaring sales of soft drinks (described in CSPI's 1998 report "Liquid Candy") and the sugar content of pastries, ice cream, and other snack foods, it's not hard to figure out where the increase is coming from. Unfortunately, labels don't distinguish added from naturally occurring sugars or indicate the percentage of a reasonable daily intake that a serving of food provides.

We have urged the FDA to adopt the USDA's recommendation of 10 teaspoons -- 40 grams -- per day as the Daily Value and to add a line on food labels for "Added Sugars."

I urge you to write to the Commissioner of the FDA and urge a quick, favorable response to CSPI's petition (which was supported by dozens of organizations and nutritionists). I have enclosed a sample letter that you could sign and mail in, but a personal letter would be much better.

Sincerely,



Michael F. Jacobson, Ph.D.
Executive Director

